DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 245 637 HE 017 383

TITLE	Study Group on Excellence in Education--Final Report (Fort Collins, Colorado, March 1984).
INSTITUTION	Colorado State Univ., Ft. Collins.
PUB DATE	Mar 84
NOTE	20p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Admission Criteria; Advisory Committees; College Admission; *College Bound Students; *College School Cooperation; *Educational Quality; Educational Research; Educational Technology; Higher Education; *State Universities; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Colorado State University; Excellence in Education

ABSTRACT

Recommendations of the Colorado State University Study Group on Excellence in Education are presented, based in part on a review of reports issued by commissions, governmental agencies, and other groups. The Study Group sought to identify projects for the university to undertake to cooperate with Colorado public and private schols in the pursuit of educational excellence. The Study Group was composed of representatives of the university, the local school district, and the business community. The foci have been recent assessments of the quality of education in the United States, and possible and feasible measures to enhance the quality of education. The recommendations, which were submitted for consideration by appropriate groups and organizations, fall into six general areas of concern: communications, admission standards, preparation for careers in public education, educational technology, Center of Excellence, and research. A rationale for each of the recommendations is also provided. In addition, suggestions for the university regarding ongoing efforts and academic programs deserving additional emphasis and support from the college are included. A list of the current membership of the Study Group is appended. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED245637

HE 017 383

Final Report

STUDY GROUP ON EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Fort Collins, Colorado
March 1984

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Colorado State Univ.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

HE 017 383

For additional copies of this report please contact:

Colorado State University
Publications Service
271 Aylesworth Hall
Fort Collins, CO 80523

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Prologue 2

Recommendations

A. Communications 3

B. Admission Standards 5

C. Preparation for Careers in Public Education 8

D. Educational Technology 9

E. Center of Excellence 11

F. Research 12

Summary of Recommendations 14

Conclusion 16

Members of Study Group 17

Introduction

The tidal wave of public concern about the state of public education in the United States led to the organization of the Colorado State University Study Group on Excellence in Education. With a strong endorsement from Robert D. Phemister, Interim President of Colorado State University, and David Neenan, President of the Board of Education for the Poudre R-1 School District, the Study Group took as its charge to identify projects for the University to undertake to cooperate with Colorado public and private schools in the pursuit of educational excellence. In an advisory capacity, the Study Group reports to the President of the University. However, the individual members stand ready to participate as they can in the implementation of identified projects.

The Study Group reviewed a variety of reports issued by commissions, governmental agencies, and other groups and organizations. In addition, as part of its activities the Study Group met with Dr. Milton Goldberg, Executive Director of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, and Mr. George Hanford, President of the College Board. As should be clear, the foci have been (1) recent assessments of the quality of education in the United States, and (2) possible and feasible measures to enhance the quality of education.

The Study Group agrees wholeheartedly with the conclusion stated recently in the pamphlet issued by the Education Commission of the States, entitled *Action for Excellence:*

> There are few national efforts that can legitimately be called crucial to our national survival. Improving education in America — improving it sufficiently and improving it now — is such an effort. Our purpose is to reach as many citizens as possible to persuade them to act. The facts on education and achievement in America have recently been gathered and presented by many different groups. What is needed now is to act on those facts.

The Study Group consists of members drawn from the University, Poudre R-1 School District, and the business community. Moreover, the membership has changed in accordance with the projects at hand or the expertise needed to assist in analyzing the problems. A list of the current membership appears on the last page of the report.

Prologue

During its deliberations, the Study Group identified a number of ongoing efforts and academic programs deserving additional emphasis and support from the administration, faculty, and staff of the University. The following list highlights the efforts discussed but does not exhaust the inventory. Without intending to dismiss other efforts not mentioned, the Study Group urges the University to continue to:

1. Place high priority on excellence in teaching.
2. Assure that all Departments consistently evaluate the teaching effectiveness of all faculty members so as to identify and reward excelient teaching.
3. Take action to insure the best possible environment for teaching and learning at Colorado State University.
4. Open and maintain dialogue with all private schools and public school districts concerning the entire curriculum for prospective teachers.
5. Investigate and evaluate the need for and delivery of remediation at Colorado State University.
6. Examine curricular enhancement efforts within the private schools and the public school districts and relate curriculum development at the University to these efforts.
7. Assure the careful matching of supervising teachers and student teachers in order to maximize benefits.
8. Exercise educational leadership on campus and within the community.

Recommendations

The Study Group developed several recommendations and submits these for consideration and possible implementation by appropriate groups and organizations. These recommendations fall into six general areas of concern and each appears below with an appropriate rationale.

A. Communications:

1. Develop and expand the current communication avenues with the private and public schools so as to inform those who need to know of the academic progress of former students. Specifically, the communications should go to high school principals, superintendents, and presidents of governing boards.

   Rationale: A very effective method of evaluating a high school program involves observation of the academic progress of the graduates. Currently the Departments of Mathematics and English inform the public schools concerning the placement of their graduates in mathematics and composition courses at Colorado State University. Plans call for the Office of Admissions and Records to develop the means to inform the private and public schools of the overall academic progress of former students. The Study Group recommends specifically that this information go to high school principals, superintendents, and presidents of governing boards so as to insure that all who need it actually receive it.

2. Develop a program for high school student visits to Colorado State University and other institutions of higher education early in the high school careers of the students for informational purposes.

   Rationale: A high percentage of students graduate from high school ill equipped to do well in college. In addition, some students fail to realize that they need to begin preparation early by enrolling in appropriate coursework if they intend to preserve some choice for themselves later in life. By visiting the campuses early during their high school careers, the students will have occasion to discover which courses they need in order to attend college in the majors of their choice. These visitation events should include parents and high school teachers and counselors as often as possible to assure full communication, coordination, and cooperation.

3. Support the Colorado State University Department of Mathematics and the University of Colorado-Boulder Department of English in the development and administration of diagnostic examinations for high school juniors in mathematics and English.

   Rationale: The State Department of Education has contracted with the named Departments to develop and administer diagnostic examinations to assist the high schools and the students to evaluate student preparedness for college. The initial examination period will occur during January 1984. The experience of the experts in the fields indicates that the Departments should cooperate closely in this effort, since some of the difficulties that students have in mathematics and English result from lack of reading skills. Therefore, the Committee urges strong support for the work of the two Departments as well as close cooperation and coordination between them.

   The proposal for the testing emerged from the work of the two State-wide Task Forces established under the joint sponsorship of the State Department of Education and Colorado Commission on Higher Education to assess and evaluate instruction in mathematics and English in Colorado. Both Task Forces issued reports containing substantive recommendations. The content of those recommendations relates to other sections of this report.

4. Urge the State Board of Education to continue the two State-wide Task Forces that studied Mathematics and English instruction.

   Rationale: These two State-wide Task Forces fulfilled their assigned charges, but much remains to be done in these areas. Specifically, the Study Group recommends that the State-wide Task Forces be given charges to assist the private and public schools in the implementation of adopted recommendations. In addition, the Task Forces should monitor the diagnostic testing scheduled to begin in January 1984.

   To implement this recommendation, the Study Group proposes a joint communication to Commissioner of Education Calvin Frazier and State Board of Education President Donald Ament from Presidents R. D. Phemister and David Neenan.

5. Take a more active role in educating the public about the University's involvement in projects and programs to improve public education in Colorado and the nation.

   Rationale: Colorado State University faculty members have played key leadership roles in Colorado, the region, and the nation in public education. As examples, the Departments of Mathematics and English have pioneered diagnostic and/or placement testing and have made the results available to the public schools. The Departments of Education and Vocational Education have provided leadership in the development of programs responsive to the needs of rural schools and the introduction of computers and computing into the instructional process in the public schools. The State Department of Education has commended the University for the quality and preparedness of the graduates certified to teach in the public schools. The University and the faculty deserve recognition for these exemplary efforts.

B. Admission Standards:

1. Reevaluate admission standards for entering freshman and transfer students.

   Rationale: The current discussion concerning public education makes clear that colleges and universities have contributed to the problems by failing to maintain appropriate standards. While the intent of the recommendation focuses upon reevaluation on campus, the effort will require considerable communication and cooperation with the private and public schools in Colorado. Simply to raise admission standards does not respond to the problems, especially if the standards have the effect of discouraging students who might otherwise benefit from the effort to prepare themselves for college. In addition, any changes in admission standards must take effect prospectively so as to allow the schools and the students to respond.

   The admission standards for transfer students have much the same effect upon students who seek to overcome deficiencies from high school by attending community and junior colleges to prove themselves. The concern must be for the applicant's ability to succeed in college and not the precision of the statistical indices.

The two State-wide Task Forces, one dealing with English instruction and the second with mathematics instruction, recommended several changes in high school graduation requirements and college admission standards. In addition, the Study Group reviewed other recommendations concerning college admission standards issued by several groups and organizations, including the Colorado Commission on Higher Education Committee on Admission Standards and Remediation. Generally, the Study Group endorses the spirit of the recommendations, if not the letter in every instance, and supports the insistence upon increased rigor in graduation requirements and admission standards. However, the Study Group also urges sensitivity in the development of new requirements and standards so as not to destroy the progress made in recent years for access to education.

The College Board report, entitled *Academic Preparation for College*, presents a well-documented and articulated case for basic academic competencies as the foundation for admission standards, whether the applicants enter from high school or community/junior college. The Study Group accepts that position but also urges the statement of admission standards in terms of (1) academic credits, (2) content of academic courses, and (3) competencies. Some applicants may attain admission with fewer credits than others, if they can demonstrate the required competencies. Standards that rest upon consideration of academic credits, course content, **and** competencies are much more difficult to define and require a good deal more clarity and precision in statement or explanation. In addition, it will undoubtedly be necessary to research and develop new ways to evaluate course content and assess levels of competency. Despite these difficulties and inconveniences, the Study Group feels strongly that this combination of factors must be considered in admission decisions.

2. Develop a pamphlet and other media releases to inform the principals, teachers, counselors, students, and parents of the admission standards at Colorado State University.

Rationale: Although the recommendations presented earlier, if adopted and implemented, will assure broader knowledge of University programs and requirements, there remains the need to provide information on a timely basis. The Study Group urges annual publications to insure that all education personnel, students, and parents know of the admission standards. No student should face denial of admission for lack of knowledge of the requirements in terms of academic preparation.

The pamphlet will discuss the requirements generally and provide a rationale or explanation for each of them. In addition, the inclusion of a matrix of majors and academic preparation requirements will clarify the standards for potential students and their parents. Finally, the pamphlet will explain the requirements in terms of academic credits, content of academic courses, and competencies, thus dispelling any impression or perception that a given number of hours spent in the classroom will suffice. The potential students and their parents should understand that the requirements refer to necessary preparation for success in college, and therefore relate to **academic credits earned, course content that serves as the foundation for future learning, and demonstrated competencies.** Time in the classroom and energy expended are relevant only insofar as they prepare the person to meet these admission standards.

3. Assure appropriate articulation within the educational system in Colorado.

Rationale: Articulation refers to the interrelatedness of academic offerings from kindergarten through college. Students and their parents deserve assurance that the educators working at the various levels know what occurs at the other levels. Articulation occurs only if and when those who work at the various levels communicate with each other about standards and requirements. Such communication depends upon a general awareness of performance measures. The State needs a reliable means to measure educational outcomes and to relate the outcomes to student aspirations. Without such measures, communication and articulation cannot occur.

C. Preparation for Careers in Public Education:

1. Place greater emphasis upon quality and continuity of teacher preparation.

   Rationale: Prospective teachers must attain competence in the subject matter they are to teach. Recent reports have emphasized the number of teachers who teach in fields for which they never prepared. This finding relates to those who teach mathematics and natural science as well as humanities and social science. The teacher preparation curriculum must provide the necessary knowledge levels and skills in the subject matter areas and assure a balance among basic skills, subject matter content, and pedagogy. In addition, all teachers must be trained to teach writing, reading, speaking, listening, and reasoning skills. Failure in this regard will only lead to exacerbation of existing problems.

   Moreover, colleges and universities will need to develop programs for the retraining of teachers currently in place. Some teachers have not taken the opportunity to upgrade their knowledge and skills. As mentioned earlier, still others have never been educated in the subject matter they must teach. To provide responsive programs, the colleges and universities must consider the schedules of the teachers who need the programs. As a corollary, school boards will need to consider ways to provide necessary support and incentives.

   Teacher preparation programs must also include exposure to the latest research findings and insights concerning cognitive development, styles of teaching and learning, and maturation — or readiness to learn. While efforts have been made to this effect in the past, the depth and breadth necessary to success in the educational process have not been evident.

   Several surveys indicate that the current core of teachers will still be teaching fifteen years from now. Unless the colleges, universities, school districts, and responsible public agencies mount programs responsive to the needs of these teachers for renewal of teaching skills and updating of subject matter competencies, the problems we face now will recur. As one means of responding to the challenge, Colorado State University should expand the effort to help develop master teachers within the schools and to assist them in their work to refine, improve, and enhance the curriculum. In turn, these master teachers will require release from teaching duties to perform

these new services and to work with other teachers to share their expertise in the art and practice of teaching.

In addition, the University should find ways to expand its programs of instruction offered during periods of the year when employed teachers can take advantage of them. In most instances, that will require increased Summer Session programming and reaching teachers at their places of work or homes through educational technology. The Study Group recognizes that effective and responsive Summer Session programming poses serious problems for the University because of the State-mandated enrollment ceiling on resident students. The University will need assistance to resolve these problems.

Finally, teaching methodology has not received the attention it merits in teacher preparation. Knowing the subject matter does not in and of itself assure teaching effectiveness. The new approaches required look toward the development of skills that facilitate learning and that relate directly to the needs and problems of the learners.

2. Reassess the programs designed to prepare people for careers as academic leaders in the private and public schools.

   Rationale: The programs in operation generally aim to develop academic administrators, a worthy objective. These programs are important and necessary. However, these programs do not emphasize or focus upon the role of the academic leader, one who understands cognitive development and curricular design. Moreover, the academic leader is one trained in teaching, who has the stature of master teacher but who has accepted a new role to provide leadership to other teachers. Unless programs designed to prepare people for such roles are developed, the kind of leadership needed will remain scarce.

D. Educational Technology:

1. Expand the services available to the private and public schools in the use of educational technology.

   Rationale: As technology transforms the society and economy, the schools must respond or become obsolete. Moreover, the new technologies can contribute to enhanced effectiveness and efficiency. The ubiquitous computers of today will surely give way before some other form of technology within the next two decades.

In order to take advantage of new technology, the schools must have professionals trained in the use of technology. Unless teacher preparation programs assure that objective, technology will not pervade the schools. This is not to suggest the dismissal of all but technological training. Rather the recommendation relates to the means to provide assistance to those who enter the educational process.

In addition, as the recent report by the National Science Board Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science, and Technology makes clear, students need to understand and appreciate technology, its pervasiveness in modern society, and its place within modern life. However, there simply are no programs to speak of to train people who will have responsibility for technology education in the schools. Such programs must be developed.

2. Develop two videotape courses focused upon study skills, one designed for use in the junior and senior high schools and the second for use in colleges and universities.

   Rationale: Far too many students at all levels lack the skills basic to study and learning. Once the tapes are developed, the University should identify external funding to provide them free of charge to the schools in Colorado.

3. Install a satellite uplink on the University campus to facilitate communication and exchange with all private and public schools in the State.

   Rationale: The technology exists to establish direct communication links between the schools and the University for programming of all kinds. If the University has the uplink, then each school can obtain access by purchasing the necessary antenna and equipment. In effect, the University would then become a State-wide resource, immediately available to all. This approach to communication linkages is probably the only one that will work well in Colorado because of the topography.

4. Expand the number of video telecourses designed for use by teachers in the public schools.

   Rationale: Colorado State University has a leadership role within the State in the development of educational technology. The Office of Instructional Services is widely known as one of

the best facilities in the region and nation. The Department of Education in the College of Professional Studies has made outstanding contributions in the production of four telecourses designed for use by teachers. Such outreach efforts respond directly to real needs. The University must do more in this regard to assure that the teachers have the resources they need to succeed in the pursuit of educational excellence.

5. Expand the programs developed to assist the schools in the appropriate use of computers and computing in the educational process.

   Rationale: The pervasiveness of the computer virtually requires a response from the schools. Many students have access to the equipment in their homes and have learned some of the possibilities. At Colorado State University, several faculty members have focused upon the appropriate use of computers and computing in education. The schools need assistance concerning the acquisition of hard- and software. In addition, they need counsel and advice on the most productive ways to use computing to enhance learning. This is particularly true of rural schools. The University must maintain responsive programs to meet this need.

E. Center of Excellence:

1. Collaborate with Poudre R-1 School District in securing designation as a demonstration center of excellence in education.

   Rationale: Several proposals have surfaced in recent months for the establishment of demonstration centers or magnet schools to set worthy examples for emulation. The Poudre R-1 School District has announced a commitment to succeed in the development of excellent educational programs, and Colorado State University should support that effort in every feasible way.

   The College Board announced an intent to establish roughly twenty (20) demonstration centers across the country. In addition, the National Science Board Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science, and Technology has recommended that the federal government should support 1,000 demonstration or magnet schools at the elementary level

and 1,000 at the secondary level. When or if these proposals are implemented, the School District and the University should be prepared to respond. Of more importance, the School District and the University should proceed with the work to set an example regardless of whether these proposals are accepted and implemented.

2. Explore the establishment of a residential program at Colorado State University for high school seniors.

   Rationale: Several states have acted to establish special high schools to serve the needs of gifted students. In addition, some colleges and universities in other states have maintained residential programs for high school seniors with success for several years. Finally, many states, including Colorado, have authorized programs under which high school seniors take some of their courses in colleges and universities.

   The possibility of a residential program for high school seniors reflects a desire to provide an educational alternative for some students. Not all would choose such an alternative, if it becomes available to them, but some undoubtedly would. If such a plan is developed, extensive discussions with representatives from the private schools and public school districts would be needed to work out the details.

F. Research:

1. Sponsor and conduct research concerning the educational experiences of high school students.

   Rationale: Much is known about student experiences in the elementary schools because, for the most part, the schools tend to involve common experiences for all students. However, junior and senior high schools differ considerably from elementary schools and from each other. Moreover, little research has been conducted on the experiences of high school students, whether at the junior or senior high school level. The results of the research will certainly assist policy makers in taking decisions about educational change and reform.

2. Develop research programs in the field of cognitive science.

   Rationale: Cognitive science has emerged as an important area of research concern largely because of the impact of education-

al technology. This is not to suggest that the field is entirely new and novel but merely to point out that the advent of computer-based instruction and other forms of new technology have added urgency to the need for enhanced knowledge. In addition, the spate of recent reports on public education has given insufficient attention to such important considerations as differing cognitive styles and differing levels of readiness for learning. The University and the public schools can collaborate effectively in the pursuit of new knowledge likely to prove extremely beneficial in the effort to achieve educational excellence.

Summary of Recommendations

A. Communications:

1. Develop and expand the current communication avenues with the private and public schools so as to inform those who need to know of the academic progress of former students. Specifically, the communications should go to high school principals, superintendents, and presidents of governing boards.
2. Develop a program for high school student visits to Colorado State University and other institutions of higher education early in the high school careers of the students for informational purposes.
3. Support the Colorado State University Department of Mathematics and the Universi., of Colorado-Boulder Department of English in the development and administration of diagnostic examinations for high school juniors in mathematics and English.
4. Urge the State Board of Education to continue the two Statewide Task Forces that studied Mathematics and English instruction.
5. Take a more active role in educating the public about the University's involvement in projects and programs to improve public education in Colorado and the nation.

B. Admission Standards:

1. Reevaluate admission standards for entering freshmen and transfer students.
2. Develop a pamphlet and other media releases to inform the principals, teachers, counselors, students, and parents of the admission standards at Colorado State University.
3. Assure appropriate articulation within the educational system in Colorado.

C. Preparation for Careers in Public Education:

1. Place greater emphasis upon quality and continuity of teacher preparation.
2. Reassess the programs designed to prepare people for careers as academic leaders in the private and public schools.

D. Educational Technology:

1. Expand the services available to the private and public schools in the use of educational technology.
2. Develop two videotape courses focused upon study skills, one designed for use in the junior and senior high schools and the second for use in colleges and universities.
3. Install a satellite uplink on the University campus to facilitate communication and exchange with all private and public schools in the State.
4. Expand the number of video telecourses designed for use by teachers in the public schools.
5. Expand the programs developed to assist the schools in the appropriate use of computers and computing in the educational process.

E. Center of Excellence:

1. Collaborate with Poudre R-1 School District in securing designation as a demonstration center of excellence in education.
2. Explore the establishment of a residential program at Colorado State University for high school seniors.

F. Research:

1. Sponsor and conduct research concerning the educational experiences of high school students.
2. Develop research programs in the field of cognitive science.

Conclusion

This report presents the findings of the Study Group to date. The members stand ready and willing to assist in the implementation of the recommendations, as appropriate. In addition, the Study Group urges the Presidents to make public these recommendations with the purpose of indicating the University's and the School District's commitment to play a significant role in the pursuit of educational excellence. In this regard, the Study Group will continue to review progress and address in further detail the challenges identified and presented in this report.

Members
Study Group on Excellence in Education
Colorado State University

Dr. William Cook, Professor, Department of Chemistry; Former Dean, College of Natural Sciences; Former Chairman, National Commission on College Chemistry

Mr. Preston Davis, Director, Office of Instructional Services; Former Member, Poudre R-1 School District Board of Education

Dr. William Dean, Executive Director, Instructional Services, Poudre R-1 School District

Dr. George Dennison, Interim Associate Academic Vice President

Mrs. Kathy Dwyer, Member, Poudre R-1 School District Board of Education

Mrs. Gladys Eddy, Lecturer, College of Business; Member, National Advisory Council on Vocational Education; Former Member, Poudre R-1 School District Board of Education

Dr. Robert Gaines, Chair, Department of Mathematics; Member, State-wide Task Force on Mathematics Instruction

Dr. William Johnson, Dean, College of Professional Studies

Dr. William McBride, Associate Professor, Department of English; Member, State-wide Task Force on Composition Instruction; Member, Poudre R-1 School District Board of Education

Dr. Patrick McKee, Chair, Department of Philosophy

Dr. Charles Neidt, Interim Provost/Academic Vice President

Mr. Dolph Simons, Editor and Publisher, *Journal-World,* Lawrence, Kansas; Owner, Sunflower CableVision, Lawrence, Kansas; Owner, Columbine CableVision, Fort Collins, Colorado

Dr. John Snider, Assistant Academic Vice President; Director, Division of Continuing Education

Dr. Frank Vattano, Dean, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences